Two in Seale Case Given Life Sentences

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By Stan Simon
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NEW HAVEN, Conn., June 23—The judge who dismissed the murder-kidnap-conspiracy charges against Black Panther Bobby G. Seale and Ericka Huggins today regretfully sentenced the two kep prosecution witnesses against them to mandatory life terms.

George Sams Jr. and Warren Kimbro, both of whom pleaded guilty to second-degree murder in the May, 1969 death of fellow Panther Alex Rackley, accepted their sentences without emotion.

Prosecutor Arnold Markle praised both men for their honesty and cooperation and said he would "appeal before the appropriate board at the appropriate time" to help each win an early release.

Connecticut law permits persons sentenced to life in prison to be released on parole in 20 years. However, a commutation by the Board of Pardons can be made at any time.

Sams, a 25-year-old former Panther enforcer who admitted supervising Rackley's execution, appeared before Superior Court Judge Harold M. Mulvey in a brief morning session in a courtroom empty of spectators.

Asked if he had anything to say, Sams said, "I want to thank Mr. Markle for the last two years. I appreciate your hospitality. Thank you very much."

Kimbro, the 36-year-old former head of the local Panther chapter who admitted firing a bullet into the back of Rackley's head, appeared in an afternoon session as his sister and three other relatives watched.

Prosecutor Markle cited Kimbro's work as director of a local youth center and said, "I know he took a life—no one knows it better than him—but he's tried to repair other lives."

Kimbro, his head bowed, declined to say anything.

Last month Judge Mulvey dismissed charges against Seale and Mrs. Huggins after their six-month trial ended in a deadlocked jury. The judge said massive publicity about the case made selection of another jury impossible.